

REMARKS

Claims 45, 46, and 48-51 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) in view of Hildreth, U.S. Pat. 5,091,101 ("Hildreth"). Claims 47 and 52 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) over Hildreth in combination with a second reference. Applicants request that the rejections be reconsidered and withdrawn for the following reasons.

Hildreth discloses staining a fabric with blood and then washing it in the presence of a detergent containing a surfactant. The Examiner contends that the surfactant can be polyoxyethylene oxide and that this combined with fabric and blood provides a matrix including a mixture of these components. But the Examiner's interpretation of mixture is inconsistent with the interpretation of mixture provided on page 4 of the decision by the Board of Patent Appeals and Interferences -- "'mixture' is a commingling of the polymers and the anti-microbial agent into one mass." Plainly, the "mass" referred to by the Board is a solid mass. Washing a blood-stained fabric with a detergent including a surfactant does not provide a solid mass including the surfactant, which is dissolved in the washing solution.

All this being said, in the interests of avoiding another conflict with the Examiner over the meaning of mixture, applicants have amended claim 45 to require, expressly, that the water soluble polymer is undissolved, i.e., it is in solid form in the matrix. This is what is disclosed in every embodiment in the patent application.

The 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) and 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) rejections should be withdrawn for the above reasons.

Applicants also have added new claims 53-59. Claim 53 is independent and is the same as claim 45 prior to this amendment except that "water-soluble polymer" has been changed to "water-soluble homopolymer of ethylene oxide." See, e.g., page 8, lines 25-27 for support. The detergents described by Hildreth do not include a homopolymer of ethylene oxide.

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Respectfully submitted,

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